



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

4 DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY TO IDENTITY FRAUD CHARGES

ICE arrests 13 others at Pascagoula refinery on immigration charges

GULFPORT, Miss.—Four Mexican nationals entered guilty pleas here in federal district court on identity fraud charges, announced U. S. Attorney Dunn Lampton, Southern District of Mississippi, following an investigation and arrest by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents.

The following pleaded guilty Feb. 28 in federal court to identity fraud charges: Juan Carlos Andrade-Lerma; Eleazar Andrade-Del Rio, aka Antonio Contreras; Enrique Cuevas-Guerra, aka Andres Leal; Ignacio Garcia-Martinez, aka Daniel Garcia and Victor Gonzalez-Lopez.

The following four defendants were arrested and charged in criminal complaints filed in federal court Jan. 24 following an immigration operation at the Chevron-Texaco Refinery in Pascagoula, Miss.: Eleazar Andrade-Del Rio, aka Antonio Contreras; Enrique Cuevas-Guerra, aka Andres Leal; Ignacio Garcia-Martinez, aka Daniel Garcia, and Victor Gonzalez-Lopez. ICE special agents also administratively arrested 13 other Mexican nationals who were illegally present in the United States.

The ICE operation was part of an ongoing ICE investigation of petroleum industry subcontractors. All four defendants were later indicted on charges of using fraudulent identification to obtain employment in violation of federal law. Andrade-Del Rio also was charged with possessing a Social Security card knowing it was produced without lawful authority.

As described in the criminal complaint, ICE received information that counterfeit resident alien and Social Security cards were being manufactured and sold at Andrade-Lerma's residence in Pascagoula. After an ICE informant purchased a false set of identity documents, ICE agents obtained a search warrant for the residence. There they found equipment and other evidence that Andrade-Lerma was producing false identity documents.

Following their arrests, all five defendants facing criminal charges were ordered detained. The immigration enforcement action at the Pascagoula refinery was a joint operation by Department of Homeland Security components, including ICE special agents, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and U.S. Border Patrol agents.

"Protecting the integrity of the petroleum industry in this region is a crucial part of ICE's continuing enforcement strategy," said ICE New Orleans Special Agent-in-Charge Mike Holt. "When an individual uses fraudulent documents to get a job, it's to hide their true identity and history. As the 9/11 Commission pointed out, the United States cannot risk having 'unknown' people working in or near its critical infrastructure."

Assistant U. S. Attorney Gaines Cleveland is the prosecutor in charge of the case. U.S. Attorney Lampton praised the efforts of ICE agents for their diligent work in the investigation of this case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.